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# Archival Methods and the Veil of Sociology

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## 6 ARCHIVAL METHODS AND THE VEIL OF SOCIOLOGY

Mary Jo Deegan

Archival methods of research are crucial to reconstruct, interpret, and evaluate contributions of early sociologists that are hidden behind the veils of racism and sexism. Many of these founding sociologists profoundly shaped their communities and created important organizations to combat social inequality and injustice. Their lives as intellectuals were frequently controversial, which made them political anathemas to mainstream sociologists, usually white males working in prestigious universities who wanted money, fame, and prestige for the new discipline and its leaders.

In this chapter, I recount how I began a career using historical research to understand the rich, alternative history of the profession. First I discuss how my biographical location led to questioning mainstream accounts of the social construction of the profession. Then I discuss four projects to show how this research method emerged from the people and topics I analyze. The first major study in which I used and developed this method was *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892–1920* (Deegan 1988a). Although this was not a study in race relations, I developed my archival expertise and methods doing it. I subsequently applied this technique to three projects in race relations: “W. E. B. Du Bois and the Women of Hull-House, 1896–1899” (Deegan 1988b), *A New Woman of Color: The Collected Writings of Fannie Barrier Williams* (2002a), and *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago: A New Conscience against Ancient Evil* (Deegan 2002b).

### MY BIOGRAPHY AND THE SOULS OF ABLE-BODIED WHITE FOLK

Here are some biographical bits relevant to the study of American black/white relations (Schutz 1962, 1970). I was raised a conservative, Irish American, Roman Catholic who lived in a physically beautiful and wealthy small town on the shores of Lake Michigan. Although I lived in poverty in a female-headed household, I uncritically believed my family, friends, small town, and

country embraced the best people and the most perfect place in the world. In 1966, when I was nineteen years old, I had just completed an associate degree in chemistry and mathematics at our local community college. As part of my physical examination to enter a four-year college, I was told that I needed minor surgery on my right knee. Then my life became a living hell.

### ***Being Able-Bodied, Disabled, and Able-Bodied, 1966–1975***

After my surgery, I discovered that my handsome, wealthy, and popular surgeon was an alcoholic and probably under the influence while I was under his knife. The cast he put on my leg was too tight and damaged the nerve to the core. I was in constant, unrelieved pain for the next year, my leg from the knee down to the foot was paralyzed, and I had almost no circulation of blood through that area. My family, except for my loyal-yet-resentful mother and my life-long friends, except for my boyfriend, abandoned me. I was suddenly a nobody in the world of medicine, small towns, and the nation. I was told I would spend most of my life in a bed and wheelchair, unemployed, and in great pain. Everyone around me told me to accept my new life and limb and learn to cope.

Instead of adjusting, I became quite bitter. I no longer thought everything was perfect. I perceived of coping as a mechanism used by people in authority to coerce the disabled to accept things that were wrong and unacceptable. Americans in my small town were cruel to me as an emaciated person with an atrophied and black leg—the poor circulation turned my leg black within seconds whenever it was not elevated. People stared at me and visibly were revolted; children pointed in horror; and parents hurried them away from me. I radiated the constant, tortuous pain I experienced in my rare trips outside my home.

I started to sharply question the process of providing medical services and grew to understand the social construction of “able-bodyism”—although I then lacked a word for the process. Later I learned that I became a phenomenologist during this period because the only thing I understood and trusted was my experience of pain and disability. I was surrounded by powerful people who were socially reconstructing my life, identity, and future, but I systematically rejected what they were saying and doing to me. The historical context of my disability is important to understand, too: There were no curb cuts on public streets, no mandatory access to public buildings, no accessible bathrooms in restaurants or highway rest-stops, and no parking spaces for people with physical disabilities. The disability social movement and legislation supporting it occurred much later. If I wanted to leave our home in a wheelchair, I had to be carried whenever I faced two or more steps, a high curb, a narrow doorway, or any other physical obstruction.

Before my traumatic injury, I vaguely had followed civil rights issues on television but personally had been uninvolved. Slowly, I wondered if white Americans were unjust in many unreflexive ways—just as able-bodied people were to the disabled—and I was one of them. With this insight into the souls of able-bodied white folk, I joined the battle for civil rights. Then I wondered if Americans were unjust by fighting in Viet Nam and decided we were: I joined the peace movement. Then I connected a series of experiences I had had as a woman in college majoring in a male-dominated field, chemistry: I joined the women's movement. All of these groups—civil rights activists, war protesters, and feminists were anathema to my circle of family, friends, and small-town life. I went from having an unquestioning view of my home, friends, family, and community to one that was sharply analytical, tough, and critical.

At this difficult time, an important person entered my life: a funny, sarcastic, imperious physical therapist, Mrs. Marjorie Stamm. No matter what misfortune happened to me—black leg, poverty, abandonment, pain—she would laugh, painfully twist a muscle, and pat me on the back. She had been an officer in the Women's Army Corps in World War II and had seen much worse problems than I had. I was in daily physical therapy for seven months including the original two weeks of hospitalization and later for a month in intensive rehabilitation.<sup>1</sup>

In 1969, I graduated with honors from college—making a long story short—with a major in chemistry and a minor in mathematics. I had matured enough to see that bitterness and anger were dead-ends and recognized that I still had a very privileged life—just not the one I had expected. After being unemployed (and miserable about that) for several months, I was employed as a chemist (and miserable about that). I was totally tired of being miserable. I decided to return to college, get a master's degree in a "fluff" field (i.e., sociology), and have some fun.

To my great surprise and delight, I was experiencing a spontaneous remission of my paralysis after three agonizing years. Even more unexpectedly, sociology gave me the tools to study people and society, especially physical disability, pacifism, social class, feminism, and race relations and the social movements surrounding them. I became a graduate teaching assistant at Western Michigan University and had the good fortune of having Cora Bagley Marrett, now an eminent African American sociologist but then fresh out of graduate school, chair my master's committee. I met and studied with many other wonderful faculty there, especially Morton Wagenfeld, Ellen Robin, and Stanley Robin—who inspired my second identity transformation. I changed from being a physical scientist who looked forward to a life spent in a laboratory to being a social scientist looking forward to a career of scholarship and community activism.

For my master's thesis I designed and administered a questionnaire to some of the staff members at the Michigan Department of Vocational

Rehabilitation. I had intended to study identity change in the physically disabled, a topic I was passionate about, but I was persuaded to study bureaucracies and changing definitions of services for the poor and culturally deprived (Deegan 1973). I collected my data in 1971 but was unattached emotionally to this topic, especially with its focus on bureaucratic change instead of identity change and questionnaire research instead of experiential and/or participant observation research.

Just as I finished collecting these data, a number of black friends and activists confronted me, calling me an outsider to and intruder on the black movement for power and justice. If I continued to study race relations and got a good job, they argued, I would be stealing it from a black person. I thought these were fair criticisms about my white privileges and a significant barrier to my continuing to work in a field where I did not belong. I had a deep, lived experience with anger, too, and removed myself from the study of race relations. Cora told me she did not believe these were valid reasons for leaving my study, but I ignored her. In retrospect, I see how I was part of a generation of white scholars and activists who voluntarily accepted the rationales of the black power movement (see Olson 2001).

With the encouragement of my committee, I applied to and was accepted at the University of Chicago after I had finished my coursework for the master's degree. I was immersed then in bureaucratic sociology and quantitative methods, drawing on my undergraduate training in mathematics. I had come to hate my master's thesis, however, and had many unresolved, personal issues revolving around social status and the meaning of academic work. I also developed new professional dilemmas because I was becoming a theorist and questioning the validity of quantitative research methods. I recognized that I did not believe the natural science model applied to human behavior, which was buried in ideology; social inequality organized through capitalism, racism, sexism, and able-bodyism; social constructions; and the everyday life-world (see Deegan & Hill [1991] for a discussion of my career crisis at this point).

I entered the University of Chicago in the fall of 1971 without funding. I borrowed money to continue my now-costly education for that first year. From 1972 to 1975, I received a complete fellowship with tuition and full stipend through the Medical Traineeship, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, at the University of Chicago, Center for Health Administration, supervised by Odin Anderson and Ron Andersen. I met and studied with many marvelous theorists during these years when I enrolled in forty-five courses. At this point, I was dedicated to studying identity change in the physically disabled and determined to only study what I thought was important for the rest of my life. Thus, I experienced a fourth identity transformation: I was now a theorist who studied only what I wanted, using the methods that I deemed appropriate.

So, in addition to my physical transformations—able-bodied, until the age of nineteen, then told authoritatively that I was permanently disabled, and then around twenty-four I once again was able-bodied—I was stunned to experience yet another identity transformation, my fourth: theorist.

These tales of identity change fundamentally showed me how people are embodied, subject to change, and located in historical and social situations. It also showed me that the everyday and larger social worlds are products of human action and meaning. I reasoned that since we can create an unjust world, we can create a just one. Similarly, institutions are not given but created, and helping change these institutions is a privilege. Sociology gives us the tools to engage in seeing and creating the world, although it, too, is a product of that world.

Given my physical and identity transformation as a re-able-bodied sociology student, I zipped through the University of Chicago, graduated in four years, and my doctoral dissertation was exactly what I wanted: *Identity Change in Modern Society: A Study of the Physically Disabled* (1975).

## **ON BECOMING A FEMINIST PRAGMATIST AS A HISTORIAN OF AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY**

After graduation, I intended to become a contemporary theorist who studied physical disability. I also knew my multiple political commitments would continue personally and professionally. I became interested in what I thought would be one tiny, easy task: discovering and writing a short paper about one woman in the history of sociology. Two major events sparked my interest in this topic. While studying the sociology of contemporary women, I was shocked to discover hundreds and hundreds of books written by and about women in the basement stacks at Regenstein Library. I had been taught that I was on the forefront of a new area of study, but that was clearly untrue. At about the same time, I wanted to write a short popular essay for *Ms* magazine, which had a monthly column on heroic tales of “lost women.” I was sure that there had been at least one woman in sociology around 1900. Looking only at the *American Journal of Sociology* from 1892 to 1930 I found dozens. This gave me a list of names.

I began to learn how to use archives and historical methods to study women who were not in the sociological annals. I did not know who they were or how they were connected to sociology. I had learned a great deal about “Chicago sociology” at the University of Chicago, but it was immediately apparent that women who were part of this history were omitted from this teaching process. Every summer from 1975 to 1981, I traveled to archives across the country, gleaning names and information. I had a very basic technique: If the word “sociology” appeared in their correspondence, publications,

or job title, I copied their papers. I did not know who they were before I ferreted around in the archives—totally unacceptable behavior to archivists. I was supposed to know my subjects, topics, and the name of my major person of interest.

I knew little about the history of sociology except what I had learned about white men from Chicago and Europe. I soon discovered that stationery letterhead gave the names of officers of groups, sponsors of research, and basic network information. I copied many letters that were “unimportant” to archivists who read letters for content and did not understand using letters for network analysis or trying to construct a lost history. I also studied “unimportant” people (i.e., women) with minor faculty or social positions when the archives were filled with information about important people. Fortunately, most of the archivists were feminists and sympathetic to finding “lost women,” but I was a frustrating client for them.

After five years of diligent and financially costly work, I had a disjointed manuscript of over 800 pages with a little bit on this person and a little bit on that person. My former professor, Morris Janowitz, had taught the history of Chicago sociology in a required course segment in 1975, but I regarded this work as irrelevant and boring; I wanted to be a contemporary theorist. Visiting him in 1980, I told him about my gigantic, amorphous work, and he said: “Why don’t you study Jane Addams?” His brilliant and quick insight led to my writing about one woman and the eight men at the University of Chicago whom I had studied earlier and grudgingly under Janowitz’s tutelage. This book, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892–1920* (Deegan 1988a), contradicted everything written about Chicago sociologists that I had learned.

To have a logical counter-argument to the legitimated literature, which did not consider Addams a sociologist, I established criteria for determining who is a sociologist. I drew on the work of Dirk Kaesler who studied German sociologists whose careers were strongly affected, if not destroyed, by World Wars I and II. Kaesler (1981) defines a sociologist as someone who fulfills at least one of the following five criteria: (1) occupies a chair of sociology and/or teaches sociology; (2) is a member of the German Sociological Society (changed here to membership in any sociological society); (3) is a coauthor of sociological articles or textbooks; (4) defines him- or herself as a sociologist; and (5) is defined by others as a sociologist. Addams, of course, met all of these criteria. I (1988a:7–15) modified this list for women in sociology by adding: (6) is engaged in women’s work in sociology in social settlements or women’s separate organizations (such as the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union); and (7) is engaged in women’s work in sociology by using a socially constructed theory to actively organize for social change with a disenfranchised or oppressed group (especially with women, the poor, African Americans, immigrants, children, or physically disabled). These criteria have



been extremely helpful for studying any sociologist who has been forgotten, neglected, or subjected to discrimination in the annals of the discipline.

Janowitz commissioned me to write a monograph on Addams for his eminent *Heritage of Sociology* series for the University of Chicago Press. I was thrilled. I was going to be published in the major history of sociology series in the profession. I began work immediately and sent him copies of the work, which was very rough indeed. I had to create an entirely different story of Chicago sociology and to understand Addams, whom I had originally thought was important politically but not intellectually. I had to unlearn what I had been taught and create a new history of the largest and most important early school in the profession. In this book, I analyzed "critical pragmatism" and "cultural feminism" as two sometimes overlapping and sometimes conflicting aspects of her thought.

Janowitz hated my book. The men of the Chicago School, he argued, shaped Addams who was a not-very-bright but good-hearted sociologist. Unless I wanted to commit "career suicide," I had to change the manuscript and get it right. "Didn't I understand anything I had been taught?" he asked me. Thus ended my dream of having a more recognized and prestigious career in my immediate future.

I worked and worked on my manuscript, sending it to several publishers where it was rejected repeatedly. I ran into the political clout of Janowitz everywhere. Publishers would ask reviewers who were the important people in this field and without exception Janowitz was named and he hated my manuscript. With little hope, I sent the manuscript to Irving Louis Horowitz at Transaction Press. He and his more independent reviewers recommended revising and resubmitting. They advised me to remove many references (about half) to patriarchy, which were redundant and distracting, and try again. To my surprise, the text was improved dramatically. I was delighted when it was selected by *Choice* (American Library Association) as one of the Outstanding Academic Books of 1988–1989. About then, I returned to my earlier interest in American race relations.

### ***Returning to the Study of Race Relations with My Skills in the History of Sociology, 1985***

Two things happened in 1985. I had finished the Addams book and I was reading a considerable amount of literature claiming she was, at best, an unreflexive, white, middle-class women biased against black Americans and, at worst, an active racist. How could I have missed this major point? Was my white privilege blinding me to injustice? I began to research her work with W. E. B. Du Bois, using documents in her papers. Again I was in new territory, contradicting the standard accounts of how *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) was written, including Du Bois's (1903/1961, 1920, 1968) own reflections on the process.

That summer, I also was enrolled in the Women, Health and Healing Institute at the University of California–San Francisco and the University of California–Berkeley. I was surprised to hear young women involved in black women’s health care state that they had never worked with a white person—those people with so many resources and so much racism. They pleaded with their audience to get involved: “Wouldn’t we help?” I considered their presentation, my previous experience, and my power as a tenured white professor and decided to return to the study of race relations, this time in my specialty, the history of sociology.

I immediately began to use references to Du Bois and to Fannie Barrier Williams that I had discovered during my earlier work with women in sociology. I started systematically reading and researching these two sociologists and other black sociologists and interviewing older black sociologists when I went to sociology meetings to understand more about their lives and eras. The impact of racism was clear, but their trained skills and empowerment were also evident. I called this convoluted and often discriminatory process shaping their black experience in sociology “the veil of sociology,” drawing on the work of Du Bois (1903/1961; see Deegan 2002a). Black women’s deeper exclusion from the annals of the profession, in comparison to black men and white women, became immediately evident as I constructed new lists. Their differential, black female experience in sociology emerged from “the Gendered Veil of Sociology” (Deegan 2002a, 2002b).

Some new methodological problems appeared. There was a lack of black archives, different call numbers and physical locations for sociology and for black studies (“HM” and “HN” for mainstream sociology and “HV” for early women sociologists classified as social workers versus “E” for African American Studies), and different languages, references, events, interpretations, and people in this literature compared to those in my original training in mainstream sociology and my subsequent learning in the history of women in the profession.

### **WORK ON W. E. B. DU BOIS AND *THE PHILADELPHIA NEGRO* (1899)**

I used the Addams and Du Bois microfilms to document the mutual influences between these two organic intellectuals who had changed the world. This alliance was underresearched because of the plethora of studies claiming Addams discriminated against blacks. As noted above, I had studied Addams’s work on *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (Residents of Hull-House 1895) for my Addams book. Isabel Eaton (1895) had written a chapter in this edited book, was a Quaker, and was a sociology graduate student at Columbia University. Eaton’s (1899) analysis of black women’s domestic labor was a significant section of

*The Philadelphia Negro* and her master's thesis. Du Bois used the questionnaire and insights from *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, and Addams was involved in the early selection of candidates for this new project. I built on my earlier work in this area and extended this knowledge to a new social settlement, Starr Center, in Philadelphia, and dove into the huge literature on Du Bois.

I began teaching Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* in 1985 and since then I have taught it twenty or more times. Du Bois is one of my major intellectual anchors to understand the world and the particular insights of prophetic pragmatism (West 1989). I published my first article on Du Bois for John Stanfield's special issue of the *American Sociologist* on race relations and socialization (Deegan 1988b). It took me seventeen years to pull together my analyses and research on black sociology and Chicago, which resulted in my 2002 book on the subject (discussed further below).

### WORK ON FANNIE BARRIER WILLIAMS

While I was slogging away on Addams and U.S. race relations, the name Fannie Barrier Williams appeared repeatedly and I began studying her life and work. This involved many problems: She was largely unknown except for her amazing speech at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893. She had no archival deposits, although her husband S. Laing Williams was a "spy" for Booker T. Washington (see his correspondence in Washington 1972–1989). Williams had two published letters to Washington, and I traveled to the Library of Congress hoping to find more. To my dismay, I discovered that one of the two published letters had faded to illegibility and, instead of finding many more, I could not even read the one that was published in the Washington papers.

Williams was portrayed most unattractively in the scant literature on her as a "Bookerite" accommodationist, a woman who "passed" as white, a traitor to black people's interests, and a venal opportunist who pushed her husband's ambitions. Given this daunting view, I asked myself why I liked her writings so much. I answered this question by intensively studying her life and ideas, largely published in obscure black newspapers, journals, and books, and concluding that she was a "feminist pragmatist," my new concept to study Addams. Williams's and Addams's ideas and work were very similar and echoed those of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Once again I needed to develop criteria to study Williams and other African American women in sociology whose work had been ignored in the sociological canon. These indicators of sociological thought and practice include: (1) engagement in work in black women's clubs; and (2) engagement in work in civil rights organization using a socially constructed theory to actively organize for social change with African Americans. As noted earlier, I called the peculiar barriers facing Williams the Gendered Veil of sociology.

Elizabeth Higgenbotham, the eminent African American scholar, gave a positive review of my manuscript to Northern Illinois University Press (NIUP). Despite this strong support, the stigma against Williams runs very deep: The project manager at NIUP repeatedly “corrected” my interpretation and systematically shifted my language to condemn Williams and praise other black women, especially Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Anna Julia Cooper. I received two extremely favorable reviews by Rosemary Bray McNatt (2002) for *UU (Unitarian-Universalist) World* and Janet Duitsman Cornelius (2003/2004) for the *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society*, but no sociological reviews.

### WORK ON ADDAMS AND RACE RELATIONS

Meanwhile, I was trying to write a book on Addams and American race relations. I was well versed in the multiple literatures I use: history of women, women in sociology, Black Studies, sociology of race relations, American pragmatism, Chicago sociology, and the history of black women. I combined these literatures, massive archival data, and some interviews into one manuscript: *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago: A New Conscience Against Ancient Evils* (2002b). I tried to brutally confront the signs of Addams’s racism: her friendship with Washington, a thoughtless withdrawal from a confrontation between black and white women on a ship sailing to a peace conference, her lack of explicit work with black Americans, and her comparison of their lives with the experiences of immigrants from Europe, which ignored or distorted the unique experiences of black Americans. I balanced these “signs of racism” with her significant friendships with Du Bois, Williams, and Wells-Barnett. Other positive ties with black Americans included her founding work with the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the interracial Frederick Douglass Centre.

My historical skills were stretched in new ways. I began to study Washington and his network for the first time. I had ignored this literature because of my long-standing commitment to Du Bois: I unthinkingly had adopted his antipathy to Washington. I also researched the work of about seventy-five other people who worked in Chicago race relations and moved beyond sociology networks. I examined new social events, literatures, biographies, etc.

When the book was completed, I really disliked it! I had scrupulously attended to all the evidence—in books, scholarship, archives, newspapers, etc. But the writing in the manuscript see-sawed: This is racist evidence, this is nonracist evidence; this is good, this is bad. I was unwilling to send my book to a publisher, what was happening to me?

Again I had to search my own emotions and beliefs. I was angry that several well-respected publications had asserted that the white press in Chicago

was so biased that black news was not covered (e.g., Spear 1967). As I gradually found first this newspaper item and then that one on Addams and Chicago race relations, I concluded that I had wasted a lot of time accepting this false argument. I started looking for items around Lincoln's birthday and specific dates, such as the founding of the NAACP or the 1908 Springfield, Illinois, race riot. Then I compared events in black newspapers, especially *The Chicago Defender*, to news in white newspapers, especially *The Chicago Tribune*. So I had to follow new evidence. (This work was done before the digitization of newspapers.)

Finally, I resolved my crisis concerning my disliked book: I established a new thesis. As a pacifist and feminist pragmatist, Addams did not share the fight between Washington and Du Bois. She had a "third way" to view American race relations. It was cooperative and supported both the talented tenth<sup>2</sup> and the illiterate tenant farmer. Using my new thesis, it took me two years to rewrite the manuscript. I liked this new version, which fit the evidence and theory. Sociologists generously accepted my work, and the book received the ASA Section on the History of Sociology, 2003 Distinguished Scholarly Book Award and the ASA Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2003 Honorable Mention, of the Oliver Cromwell Cox Book Award.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TIPS ON TECHNIQUES IN THE ARCHIVES

The Veil and Gendered Veil of sociology distort and hide the contributions of African Americans to the society, community, and world. Historical, archival methods, combined with experiential understanding from phenomenology and political activism, can help us transcend these barriers to understanding the history of black sociologists. In addition, new information and technologies now provide access to long-obscure documents, newspapers, pamphlets, and correspondence. Black newspapers, in particular, documented the lives and ideas of black America over the last century. Chicago, moreover, was the home of several major black newspapers and is a rich resource for studying black Chicago, sociology, and community events. Newspaper items, however, are often brief and list multiple names and places, making filing and cross-referencing complex.

I have developed a series of methodological aids to systematize how I research sociologists explicitly ignored or distorted in the canon. First, my life-partner, Michael R. Hill (1993), has been a rich resource for developing and exploring archival data. He codified his insights in a book I use often. Second, I have developed new ways to organize and file data from newspapers and the Internet, resources particularly important for scholars without archival deposits. Third, I have developed a theory and praxis based on the work of

Addams and her allies in sociology. They were usually based at Hull-House or the University of Chicago but often in other settings underresearched by sociologists, such as the Frederick Douglass Centre or the Negro Fellowship League in Chicago. I discuss these tools next.

### ***Hill's and Stanfield's Influence***

Michael Hill (1993, 2001; Hill & Hoecker-Drysdale 2001) is a leading international scholar in the sociology of Harriet Martineau and archival research. His techniques are also mine, and I explicate them briefly here. Hill wrote the first book in sociology on how to conduct archival research: *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (1993). This seminal book can be used by specialists and students. It is short, readable, and theoretically organized by a dramaturgical framework. It draws on his years of doing historical sociology and his theoretical training in dramaturgy, phenomenology, systems theory, and interpretive sociology. He also drew on my experiences (which he meticulously acknowledges) and years of breaking the rules of archival research, which helped me learn what those rules were. I engaged in a kind of unintentional series of breaching experiments (Garfinkle 1967), especially in my work on Jane Addams and predominantly white women in sociology (Deegan 1988a, 1991).

First, Hill discusses how archives are sorted and stored. This is particularly important for black archives because many of these records have been lost or collected haphazardly. Archives, especially well-funded ones, are associated frequently with white enterprises, such as white-controlled universities and private libraries. Until recently, these institutions had few black holdings and did not actively search for more. Even today, many archives do not note the names of black people and organizations making the identification of black archival resources difficult. In 2004, for example, I wanted to find any papers at the Chicago Historical Society that they held on black women. The staff told me they did not have any, so I identified several black women for them. (I am sure some people on their staff did have this information, but none of the staff that I worked with over a four-month period knew it.) This suggests that other papers by black people may be at their institution, but they remain unidentified at this point.

Hill calls the first stage of collecting, tossing, and sorting material by the owner the "primary sedimentation." The "secondary sedimentation" of intentionally collecting, tossing, and sorting material for an archive by the recipient or after the death of the original owner is the next crucial step. Many valuable papers are discarded at this stage because of illness, grief, ignorance, or estate pressures. The final sorting and filing, the "tertiary sedimentation," occurs at the archive. Each stage is fraught with potential errors.

John Stanfield has worked extensively with black historical archival material. His research on *Philanthropy and Jim Crow in American Social Science* (1985) was crucial to my understanding of African American archives, perspective, and participation in the African American Chicago school of race relations (Deegan 2002b). Stanfield (1987) raises many of the same questions that Hill does, but he also focuses specifically on the voluminous papers of E. Franklin Frazier, which have significant gaps despite their size. Stanfield (1985) made the first critical analysis of Robert E. Park's approach to race relations based on archival methodology, and this was a significant aid in my understanding of Park and Addams (Deegan 1988a). Stanfield's (1993) interviews of the "first generation" of race relations research helped me see the mixture of biography and scholarship that is vital to my work on Addams, the "segments" of Chicago race relations schools, as well as my self-reflections here.

Archivists usually conduct an interview before giving access to archival holdings. They need to understand what is sought and determine whether the archives have such material and if the person asking for entrée has the skills and ability to use the materials correctly. Although archivists want capable researchers to use the materials, sometimes they may not be helpful and this is almost impossible for a researcher to determine. Thus, an archivist disguised information that was unflattering to the University of Chicago, and it took me several years to discover this subterfuge.

Archives have one-of-a-kind material that is accessed through request forms submitted by the researcher that are screened before and after the material is used. This is an expensive and time-consuming process. For example, researchers may ask for material and wait thirty–forty-five minutes for its appearance at a selected table. Timing breaks and meals around this schedule can be difficult, especially if the researcher is unfamiliar with the institution or setting. Copying materials may be expensive (e.g., \$.60/page) or unavailable for fragile items. Researchers are often visually under surveillance because these one-of-a-kind materials are irreplaceable and sorting and organizing them is technical and costly. A researcher may consult several papers at one institution and then visit a number of institutions that also have multiple files of interest. The researcher quickly amasses a large amount of material that needs to be stored and sorted. One item, moreover, may be relevant to several different people and topics.

### ***Learning to File Archival Material***

Filing the copies of material obtained from archives is expensive and daunting. One letter, for example, may mention three or four people, as many topics, and a narrative about these things. Personal and public events intertwine, and



multiple projects can use the same letter. Filing is a huge and complicated problem, one that I have not resolved. Sometimes I file items in paper folders identified by the name of the person or organization, or interests organized by race, gender, or interracial categories. Sometimes I use notebooks to do so, and these are very bulky and heavy. The advantage of the latter system is that I can quickly re-sort material and visually see patterns that are hard to discern otherwise.

When each piece of paper is put in a plastic sleeve with a three-hole punch, these notebooks provide easy access to different items. This is an expensive and laborious project but it pays off when working with thousands of items with potentially several projects on each page. I have dozens of such notebooks for my present projects and they are extremely awkward to handle. Each notebook, however, allows me to check and organize my material quickly for a given topic or person.

An example of a total reorganization of all my archival material is my rewriting of *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago*. It took two years to rewrite the book because every item had to be connected in a different pattern. Originally, I had used the Du Bois-versus-Washington categorization, where Du Bois held the “correct” position on race relations. This dichotomization was part of a conflict model. This was such an accepted approach in the sociology of knowledge that I did not even imagine a different way to interpret my material. Addams, however, advocated the elimination of dichotomies and the consistent use of cooperation. This third way to view black and white social relations not only organized her work, but recognized that she was part of, and sometimes led, a large social movement also supporting these values and patterns of interaction. Thus, Addams and her allies created a pattern of race relations that characterized a city and its race relations organizations that contradicted my filing system. The contemporary scholarship on Chicago race relations, moreover, shared Du Bois’s opposition to Washington and a co-operative model and ignored the considerable evidence of the friendship between Du Bois and Addams.

### ***Using the Internet***

The Internet expands our access to original documents. Some large-scale projects on black Americans have made previously obscure papers and publications accessible. I have increasingly used newspaper items as a resource to augment the many gaps in existing records. Each newspaper column requires a separate plastic sleeve. To gauge how complicated this process is, I can combine “Addams” and a topic, such as “Urban League,” and get fifty to a hundred items. Since many scholars assumed that these were not useful categories, this is all new material, often loaded with different names and subtopics,



and linked to other categories for different projects. I can quickly change the order and topics using a new notebook if I want to write a different article or chapter. I try not to make copies of these items because that is more paper, but occasionally a new topic crosses several existing notebooks, and I make a new notebook to accommodate it.

Material originally available only on microfilms is appearing on the Internet, too. An archival resource on a topic that might have taken months, if not years, to research on microfilm can be done in hours or days. Often these digitized materials contain bulky items such as organization's reports or pamphlets, and storing them in a plastic sleeve is difficult. So I use different colored paper files for these items, but it is easy to fill an entire file drawer quickly with this material. This, too, creates a storage problem involving expense, space, and cross-categorization.

Although this filing of archival material is cumbersome, it provides quick and complex access to the material. Each item must be accurately identified, or the system is useless. Although digitized items could be left in a digital format with a complex naming system, I cannot keep complicated information in this format and use it well. I need to see the names, the organizations, and the topics displayed before my eyes. I need to be able to change their order and categories to see new patterns and relationships. Sometimes I even need to see the mass of information to perceive changes through time and controversies. I am working on a project now, for example, that appeared to some scholars to have no newspaper coverage, but I have collected over sixty items from different newspapers on this topic. I can identify what happened, when, and to whom. When this type of information is combined with original archival papers, digitized books or journals, and scholarship, I can generate new insights about important people considered "lost" or "forgotten." Given the problems of distorting scholarship and lack of established archives, complex information can reappear with depth and complexity.

In addition to these methodological steps, I use theory to interpret archival material.

### **CONNECTING THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: FEMINIST PRAGMATISM**

My archival material is intellectually organized by "feminist pragmatism." This theory and practice draws heavily on the work of Addams, Du Bois, and dozens of women in sociology who lived at or were associated with Hull-House; who taught or studied at the University of Chicago where they developed or applied the Chicago pragmatism of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead; and/or who worked with or applied the black feminist pragmatism of Williams and Wells-Barnett, which was anchored at the Frederick

Douglass Centre, the Negro Fellowship League, or black women's clubs. I also draw on the work of the Chicago school of race relations, including Oliver Cromwell Cox, Wilmoth Carter, the Haynes family (Birdye, Elizabeth Ross, and George E.), E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, Richard Wright, Jr., and contemporary theorists in dramaturgy, women's studies, Black Studies, and pragmatism (Deegan 2002b, 2008). Feminist pragmatism underlies the approach of "the Hull-House school of race relations." Sometimes this is distinct from the Chicago school of race relations: Sometimes it complements the latter school, and sometimes it conflicts with it.

## CONCLUSION

My biography and interest in the methodology of historical race relations research are intertwined. I am historically and biographically located in a particular era, just as my predecessors were. My experience of disability, feminism, pacifism, and the civil rights movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s emerged from a particular context that was tied dramatically to sociology. In fact, I doubt if I would have become a sociologist had I not experienced medical malpractice and a severe physical injury. My experience of multiple identity transformations broke my connections to everyday reality and showed me hidden sides of American life and institutions. Although these were often confusing experiences, they expanded my sociological understanding and poignantly revealed the flexibility of social definitions and perceptions. I deeply enjoy this historical, intellectual, political, and spiritual work and admire the people I study. They enrich my understanding of society and my profession.

In addition to the feminist pragmatists noted in this chapter, I am now studying the work of more than twenty-five black women, primarily located in Chicago. Many white female sociologists worked closely with these black women between 1889 and 1935 in "the Hull-House school of race relations," during the years of Addams's greatest work and the emergence of sociology as a profession. Thus, there is no end to my historical examination of black sociology, the interaction of sex, class, and race in the city of Chicago, and the possibility of recovering significant work that has been long forgotten.

## NOTES

1. I dedicated my first book, coedited with Nancy A. Brooks, to Mrs. Stamm: *Women and Disability: The Double Handicap* (Deegan & Brooks 1985). Although Mrs. Stamm knew I was getting it published and dedicating it to her, I did not know she was dying of an aggressive cancer. I mailed a copy of the book to her, and

her brother showed it to her on her deathbed. She smiled while he held it up and slipped into unconsciousness. She died the next day. I mention this dramatic moment because she was so important to me and it shows the power of sociology to move our biographies into a social, structural process. It reveals that Du Bois (1903/1961:15) was quite correct when he noted that "being a problem is a strange experience." He added it was "peculiar even for one who has never been anything else." In my case, I was "something else," became a problem, and then looked as if I were not one.

2. This is a Du Boisian term for the African American elite of the early to mid-twentieth century.

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